

Deer Progress Report

February 21, 2011

Revised February 28, 2011

Compiled by Sandy Ritchie with input from Lee Kantar, John Pratte
and the Wildlife Management Section

Accomplishments for Week of February 13 – 19

Deer Plan – Sandy Ritchie continued to develop the Department's Deer Plan. A draft Plan was reviewed by appropriate Wildlife Division staff at a meeting in Bangor on February 17. Ritchie will incorporate input and finalize a draft for distribution among interested stakeholders at a meeting planned for March.

Monitoring Winter Severity – Staff monitored winter conditions [temperature, snow depths, deer sinking depths, and snow profile characteristics] at 26 individual monitoring stations throughout the state to estimate the impact of winter conditions on deer mortality.

Aerial DWA Surveys

- Regions D, F and G [see attached map of regions] collectively flew 19 towns to document deer use.
- Region C prepared flight protocol and base maps for surveying eastern WMD 19 from Princeton to Vanceboro/St. Croix watershed. Warden Service pilots were flying in other regions and unavailable to fly in Region C; a Department of Marine Resource's plane is being serviced and is unavailable until early March.



Ground DWA Surveys – Region E conducted ground surveys in 1 large DWA complex in WMD 9.

DWA Harvest Plans

- Regions D – G collectively reviewed 6 plans for timber harvesting within DWAs.
- Region E evaluated 1 DWA for possible timber harvesting opportunities.

Cooperative DWA Management

- Region C was contacted by Downeast Lakes Land Trust to initiate sharing of historical habitat data and collaborative efforts to protect DWA habitat from St. Croix Valley to Duck Lake Unit [WMD 19].

- Region C conducted follow-up consultations with a Wagner forester reference inspection of habitat with wintering deer in East Machias.
- Region G discussed DWA management with a Seven Islands forester for an area in T10R9 WELS.

Deer Research, Surveys, and Data Collections – Collected fetuses from 9 road-killed does to derive an index to female productivity and to provide information on breeding chronology.

Information and Outreach

- Region C reviewed and edited a news release and draft brochure in support of fetus collections downeast.
- Region G presented a DWA Management talk at the Aroostook County Conservation Association on February 18. Staff also discussed planned timber harvests in 2 DWAs [Portage, Harrow Brook] with constituents as well as a harvest agreement in a zoned DWA in Allagash with Warden Service.
- John Pratte developed 2 draft mailings: one to private pilots [guides, landowners, etc.] to encourage reports of deer concentrations seen while flying, and another to landowners updating them on winter aerial survey work.
- I & E staff met to develop deer messaging strategies.

Deer Feeding Complaints / Discussions – Regions B, E, and G collectively addressed 4 deer feeding complaints with Warden Service.

Areas of High Road Mortality

- Region C met with DOT to identify locations for installation of 4 new signs along US Route 1 in East Machias; collected GPS waypoints for installation and upgrade of 4 signs along Route 9 in Amherst and forwarded to DOT; and examined DOT sign upgrades installed in Wesley and noted deficiencies.
- Region E had 1 contact with DOT and a Guilford resident.
- Region G worked with DOT and Warden Brown to install a sign in a high collision area in Oakfield.

Predation Issues / Incidences

- Region C collected reports of predation from 5 areas, coordinated with district wardens on hunting responses, and filed predation reports with the Division Director.
- No predation incidences were reported in the other regions.
- Region E delivered 1 moose and 1 deer carcass to a coyote hunter in Sangerville – he killed 17 coyotes in WMD 17 last year.

DWA Workshops

- 1 in Region E
- Region G attended a deer modeling workshop at Seven Islands to discuss how Seven Islands models and manages DWAs.

Planned Activities for Week of February 20

Deer Plan – Sandy Ritchie will revise the Deer Plan incorporating comments from the February 17 Division review.

Monitoring Winter Severity – Staff will continue monitoring winter conditions [temperature, snow depths, deer sinking depths, and snow profile characteristics] at 26 individual monitoring stations throughout the state to estimate the impact of winter conditions on deer mortality.

Aerial DWA Surveys – Weather permitting,

- Region C will initiate flights in WMD 19 along the St. Croix River
- Region G has scheduled surveys in 3-4 towns.
- Aerial surveys are an ongoing effort in Regions D - F as well.

DWA Ground Surveys – Region E will continue ground surveys in a large DWA complex in WMD 9.

DWA Harvest Plans – Region E will review 2 plans for timber harvesting in DWAs.

Deer Research, Surveys, and Data Collections – Staff will continue collecting road-killed does and the number of fetuses per female to derive an index to female productivity and to provide information on breeding chronology.

Information and Outreach

- Region B will present a DWA Management talk at the Unity Rotary Club on Tuesday, February 22.
- Region G will consult with the Town of Ashland re a planned timber harvest on town-owned land in an unzoned DWA. Region G will also present a Deer Management program at a forestry meeting in the Town of Portage on Tuesday, February 22.
- Sandy Ritchie will work with I & E to finalize an issue profile on *Winter Feeding of Deer: What You Should Know*.
- John Pratte will finalize and forward mailings to pilots and landowners discussed above.

Deer Feeding Complaints / Discussions – Region E will meet with the district game warden and a landowner in Dover Foxcroft to resolve a deer feeding complaint.

Areas of High Road Mortality

- Region C will consult with DOT to provide modifications to new signs as requested, including orange paddles and text board.
- Region E will continue discussions with DOT regarding a high collision area in Guilford and will expand discussions to potential problem areas in the southern part of the region.

Predation Issues / Incidences

- All regions will continue monitoring and directing response as predation incidences are reported.
- Region E will deliver additional bait to a coyote hunter in Sangerville as it becomes available.

Other

- Region F will conduct a field day in a DWA in Orient that is a focus of a larger acquisition effort.
- Region G will write up a timber harvesting violation report.
- John Pratte will submit an OHF proposal for \$30,000 to help digitize DWA polygons with active deer use to provide to landowners for cooperative management efforts.

